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So You

NOBODY PLANS a wedding in Humboldt County for the same cake, lace and flowers you've seen a million times. Up on the North Coast, we like to do things a little differently, building celebrations around our individual styles, rather than trends that come and go in the flash of an Instagram scroll.

In this issue of the Wedding Guide, we're highlighting ways to customize your wedding to suit your story and your style. Starting with rings. We'll introduce you to the work of some talented artisans in our county who rework stones and settings handed down through generations, create entirely new pieces all the way from sketch to velvet box or search out ethically sourced and sustainable stones and materials.

At first glance, tuxedos may not appear to have much individuality but the handsome devil/diva is in the details. We'll share some pro tips on choosing and fitting your black-tie look, whether you're going for Bogie in *Casablanca*, slick James Bond or red carpet Ellen Page. Your bouquet can go beyond beauty, too, speaking volumes about who you are and what the day means to you. You just need to brush up on the Victorian language of flowers, the symbolic tradition

through which you can communicate everything you're feeling with the blooms and greens in your grasp.

As for your wedding's backdrop, why not go full Humboldt with a barn? Well, not just any barn. We'll ride out to a pair of beautiful barns-turned-venues with character, history and, yes, even a tractor. And while we're adding vintage touches, consider the honeymoon getaway vehicle as a piece of the setting, too. Cruise through a collection of cars — from a VW Bug to a technicolor truck to a surfboard-toting wagon — that add charm to those "just married" photos. And if you're going really classic, you can't beat black and white. We've gathered some gorgeous local examples to inspire you, along with our annual photographer's showcase, where you'll find inspiration and (fingers crossed) the right person to capture your wedding.

And for luck, we'll send you off with something blue — a spread of chic, clever, sparkly and sweet ideas for that touch of traditional blue, whether seen or just for you. Although, at the end of the long, beautiful, joyous, exhausting day, it's kind of all just for you, right?

— Jennifer Fumiko Cahill



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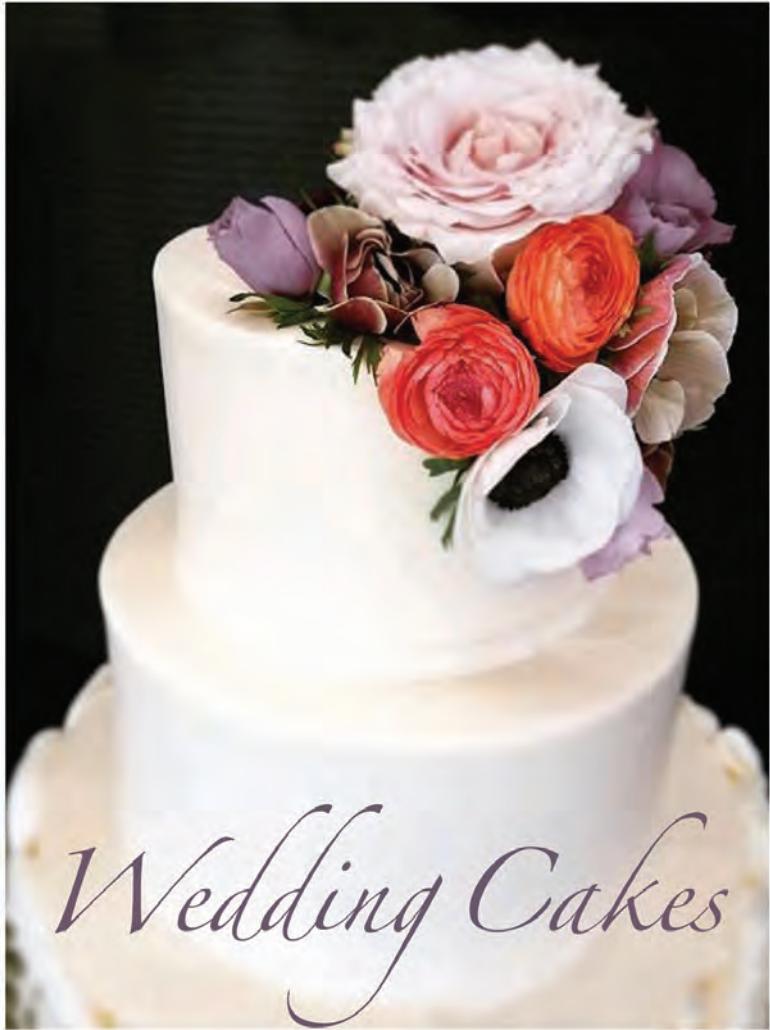
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Wedding Guide

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Helen and Loran
Briggs at Patrick's
Point in 2018.

PHOTO BY
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Getting Hitched

Two beautiful barn venues

By Nora Mounce

Photos by Amanda K. Photo Art and Callie Brodt Photography

IN FERNDALE, where dairy farms and upscale Victorians define shabby chic, necessity and creativity were the co-parents of invention. While considering possible venue options for their children's weddings, both the Brodt and Cahill families, the respective owners of At the Bluff and The Barn by Fernbridge, decided to fix up their old barns for the special day. In the process, a labor of love, each family found a romantic new business niche. Just in time for the 2019 wedding season, both beautifully renovated 19th century buildings are now available to book a truly unique and sophisticated — but oh-so-Humboldt — barn wedding.

"Barns are quintessential Humboldt venues," explains Alegria Sita, a certified wedding planner and founder at Gala Events and Weddings. With

experience working in a variety of settings, Sita believes that a barn perfectly symbolizes Humboldt County's heritage. "Barn raising was the term used for the community construction of a barn, which often took place in one day with many hands," explains Sita. "How perfect to begin a marriage in a building that holds the spirit of community, celebration and love within its walls from its first day," she adds.

Maybe walls can talk.

At the Bluff

When Amanda Brodt's sister-in-law, Callie Alexandre (née Brodt), found herself with a serious boyfriend, she started thinking about the old barn her parents had recently purchased on the bluff

Right and
page 14:
At the Bluff.
AMANDA K.
PHOTO ART







above Ferndale. "I have always been in love with the farm," says Alexandre. And the barn needed some fixing up anyway.

"My father-in-law is super handy and can build anything," adds Brodt. Before the Alexandre's 2017 wedding – the first official event for At the Bluff – Callie's father installed new windows and shiplap siding and restored the old milk barn into a photo booth. Brodt remembers how the whole family spent days pouring concrete for the new barn floor. Alexandre, a professional wedding photographer, says one of her favorite images is of her family's handprints captured in the wet concrete floor.

"The barn can be dressed up really easily, you can get romantic or even a little fancy," explains Brodt. Though she manages event scheduling and logistics, Brodt stresses that her entire family worked together to make their first wedding season a success, with everyone playing a key role. Brodt's mother-in-law, Merritt, who owns The Farmer's Daughter, a clothing and gift boutique in Ferndale, keeps the venue supplied with adorable serving platters and rustic décor. Alexandre, who now lives in Crescent City near her husband's family dairy, is often the one behind the camera, capturing the special day for newlyweds to treasure.

After rings have been exchanged and dinner served, At the Bluff's guests watch the sunset across the Eel River Valley before moving to the dance floor to celebrate the happy couple. Stretching across the bright green pasture, strings of white lights twinkle in applause.

The Barn by Fernbridge

Visiting The Barn by Fernbridge on a windy day in January, it's easy to visualize the transformation that Lea Cahill describes will take place come summer. The Cahills have owned the old barn, which sits just west of Fernbridge, for 13 years, though locals estimate it was built in the 1880s. Today, the barn still sits amidst a working dairy farm, meaning that every winter during the rainy season the barn reverts to housing livestock and equipment. Inside the barn, huge redwood beams toothpick the main room where hay is stacked ceiling high.

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Lea points out their resident owl in the eaves as Jerseys graze idly in the pasture out back.

It's a typical Ferndale farm scene but surrounding the giant tractor and farm tools, signs of merriment and revelry are everywhere: In a corner, a small redwood bar sits quietly, discreetly housing a collection of spirits. Along one wall, a 30-foot sideboard runs neatly through the barn, where caterers will put out heaping bowls of salads and platters of local cheese. Bordering the pasture, a large room with a concrete floor is adorned with light fixtures affixed with vintage Edison bulbs. Out front, a waterwheel turns peacefully and each summer the pasture is filled with golden sunflowers stretching their heads toward the big Ferndale sky.

So far, the only newlyweds who have broken ground at the barn are Cahills. Zach Cahill and

his wife Kayla married there last August after Zach talked his parents into renovating the old barn into a venue for their reception. Just like At the Bluff, the entire family got elbow deep in rehabbing the historic barn into a stylish venue. In the weeks prior to the wedding, Zach's younger brother spent days power-washing over a century of cobwebs from the eves. Kayla's father, Joe Spini, built the custom waterwheel along with new barn doors. He also catered the entire wedding. Up until the moment she left to get her hair done, Lea was there stringing lights while her 80-year-old mother-in-law weed whacked the lane out front.

"The dairy business is a family affair," Lea explains. While Zach is her oldest, the Cahill's younger three children are all college-aged and out of the house. After fixing up the barn for Zach's wedding, Lea realized that using the barn as a wedding venue was the perfect outlet for her empty nest syndrome. With her creative eye and her family's dedication, The Barn by Fernbridge is ready for the 2019 wedding season and accepting bookings with up to 600 guests. She explains that their "hay bale couches," and the milk tank room photo booth are fun touches that allow the barn to be both practical and stylish. "We have everything a bride needs other than tablecloths and flowers," says Lea.

For more than 100 years, the barns have endured the sometimes harsh natural conditions of Humboldt County, as evidenced by the 12-foot waterline from the flood of '64 marking the hand-hewn redwood beams at The Barn by Fernbridge. Still standing proudly today and more beautiful than ever, both barns are expansive, elegant Humboldt County venues to gather round family and friends and make promises to last forever. ♡

Nora Mounce writes about food and culture from the Victorian seaport of Eureka, California. She loves big dogs, Champagne, yoga and calling Humboldt County home.

Left and opposite:
The Barn by Fernbridge.
CALLIE BRODT PHOTOGRAPHY





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Along for the Ride



AWSOME AUTOMOBILES parade happy couples across the following pages. Whether or not you are an enthusiast, you must admit that nothing quite says style like arriving or departing in a sleek ride. →





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Suiting

Up

How to choose the tux, suit or formal attire that's right for you

By C. Wells

AT 27 YEARS OLD, I've attended eight weddings, served as a member of the wedding party in three and a best person in one. In the coming year, I will attend another three. It seems that an avalanche of weddings is a part of reaching your late twenties.

I now have dressing for weddings down to a science and have concluded whether the occasion be lavish and extravagant or a simple backyard redwood celebration, knowing how to properly "suit up" is a must for anybody—attending the wedding, tying the knot or otherwise.

Here are a few tips for choosing the right attire for the big day:

Plan Ahead

Every great outfit needs planning. Give yourself time to explore your options. Some things to consider: Are you renting or are you buying? Do you need to match your partner or coordinate with the wedding party? Is there a particular style you



Custom suit from Angelica Atelier Boutique. Boutonniere by Suzy Haggerty Designs. LEÓN VILLAGÓMEZ

should adhere to? Do you feel comfortable with the tailor taking your measurements? What is your timeline? Answer all these for yourself before you head to the tux shop.

Getting Prepared

A good suit or tux needs to be fitted properly. This means a tailor will be all up in your business, so be prepared and find a tux shop or tailor that respects your boundaries and makes you feel comfortable. Once you've found the one (no readers, I don't mean that one), make an appointment. Plan to bring the shirt and shoes you'll be wearing for the big day so they can tailor the suit or tux accordingly or so you can choose the appropriately-sized rental. If you already own a suit or tux, consider getting it tailored for a sharp, updated look. For those of us on a budget, thrift shopping for a suit is a fun and practical option. A good tailor can turn your find into a wedding-worthy look.

Style

Whether you're purchasing or renting a tux, many decisions lay ahead of you. Firstly, you must choose the color of your shirt and coordinate your neck tie or bow tie accordingly. Vests are also an option, though many choose to go without. Then, there are accessories: handkerchief, cummerbund, suspenders, pocket square and anything else you desire. Some folks might take this opportunity to check in with their partner — what is their vision for the wedding? Others may have to coordinate with the wedding party and consider the couple's overall aesthetic plan. Last but not least, think about your own personal style. Subtle differences in your choice of color, fit and accessories can alter the look drastically. The cut of your jacket is perhaps the most noticeable stylistic choice you'll make. Consider a cutaway or morning coat, which is more traditional and formal, while a stroller coat — a variation of a morning coat — has more whimsical flare. A dinner jacket will give you that classic Bogart-in-Casablanca look. You might choose tails for your jacket, which are typically worn with suspenders, vest and bow tie for a very formal celebration. Then there is the tuxedo — the James Bond look, which you can also update with satin trim. My personal favorite for the folks who choose not to wear a tux: the dark suit. This one is dressy but not

the typical formal look. It has become the more modern choice of attire for those who like to dress down for comfort. Again, you should consider the desires of your partner or the overall style of the wedding, too.

Fit

How many fittings does it take to get the right fit? Any professional tux shop or tailor is going to want to fit you multiple times. For this reason, it's important to plan ahead and be prepared when

you go to each fitting. As mentioned before, this includes having the shoes, shirt and any accessories you'll be using for the big day. For non-binary folks like me, this also includes deciding which binder, underwear, etc. you'll be wearing. Be sure to bring these to every fitting. Making sure your body is in the form that feels most like you is imperative for achieving the best fit and boosting your confidence. For larger folks, tuxedo and suit retailers usually carry an array of sizes or can special order sizes that work for you, but it's a good idea to check beforehand. At minimum, you should be prepared for two fittings, one on the day you choose your attire and one when you pick it up to check if further adjustments should be made. The initial fitting will involve extensive measurements — up to 35 specific points — so be prepared to have your tailor in your space, and remember, we want them there to get the fit right. Give yourself time to try on your tux/suit again before the big day.

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Feeling Good

The fundamental part of choosing the tuxedo or suit for you is about finding one that fits, well, you. Not everyone has worn a tux before and finding the right fit can be daunting, especially if you are someone who folks wouldn't generally classify as having the "traditional" or "ideal" body type for a tux. Throughout this process, remember the most important component of "suiting up": confidence. You should feel good in the tuxedo or suit you choose. That's always a good look. ☺

C. Wells is the program coordinator for the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant at Humboldt State University. They love music, vegan food and working to include non-binary and intersectional perspectives in everyday life advice.

something old...
something new...
something borrowed...

Something Blue

something old...
something new...
something borrowed...
and a silver sixpence in her shoe...

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Styling by Lynn Leishman

and a silver sixpence in her shoe...
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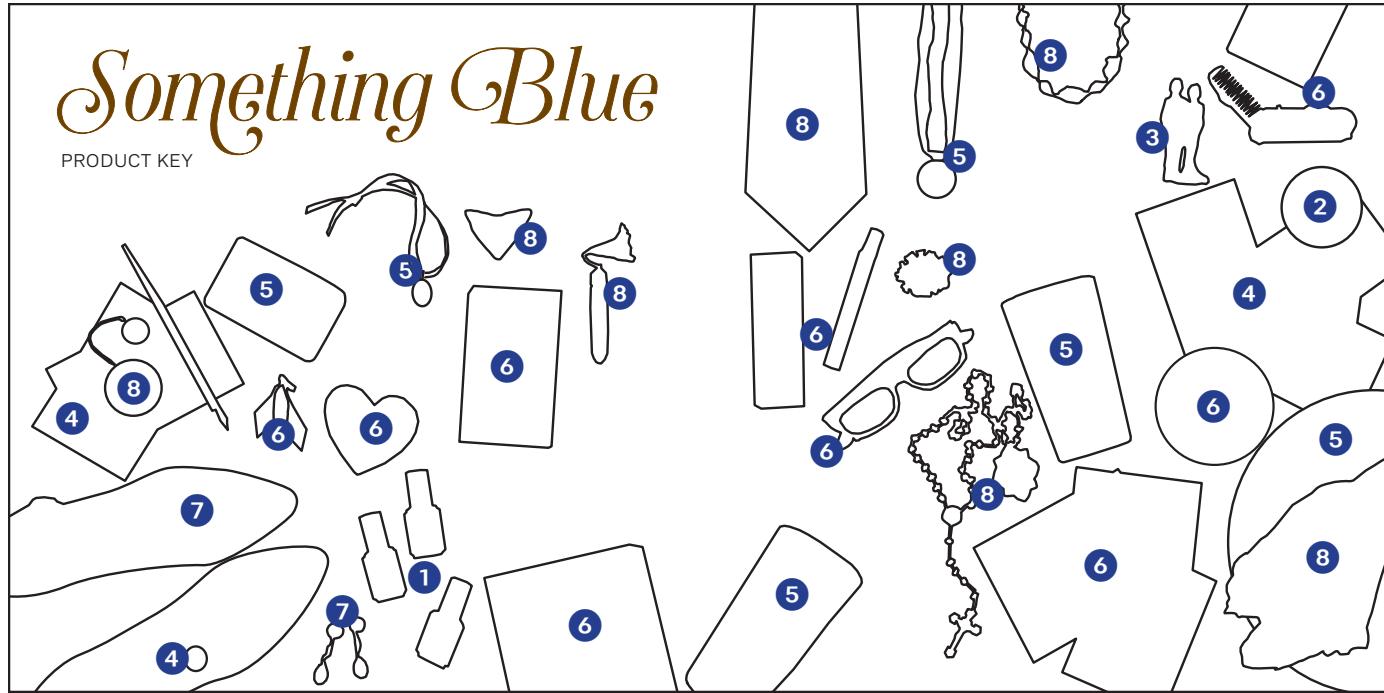




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Something Blue

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The Language of Flowers

*Sending secret messages
& love letters from the Victorian era*

By Cassie Curatolo • Illustrations by Jacqui Langeland

MANY OF US are familiar with the gesture of giving an olive branch as an offering of peace or sending red roses to demonstrate romantic feelings. While using flowers to send messages dates back centuries, floral symbolism blossomed in Victorian times, →





imparting flowers with more specific and complex meanings than ever before.

Because Victorian society had an incredibly strict set of social codes, lovers were often forced to find other ways to communicate that did not violate the etiquette and sensibilities of the era. Floriography, or the “language of flowers,” became a widely-used method for sending messages in secret. Each flower — and in some cases, the combination of flowers — carried with it a specific meaning that would then be deciphered by the recipient.

It was common to find members of the upper classes carrying pocket-sized flower dictionaries. Given the variety of flowers, in both color and species, flower dictionaries became a necessary tool to keep track of all their meanings and to decode the hidden messages imbued in bouquets. Camellia, for example, carried the sentiment “perfect loveliness.” A gift of hawthorn was a message of hope, white lilacs conveyed innocence and ranunculus simply meant “I have a message for you.” A combination of flowers, then, was a multi-layered missive.

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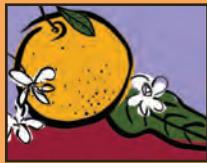
Floriography occasionally had darker uses — not all messages were pleasant ones. A gift of a yellow rose rather than a red one signaled jealousy and primrose evoked inconstancy. (Note that in contemporary culture, a yellow rose is a sign of friendship.) Giving someone a leaf of arugula meant there was rivalry between them and basil sent a message of hatred.

The Victorians clearly had a penchant for drama and intrigue but the sentiment of their petaled practices can still be meaningful for modern love birds. Flower dictionaries have been reprinted throughout the decades and have remained popular with horticulturists, florists and romantics, alike. Weddings themselves are symbolic acts, why shouldn’t the flowers have special significance, too? Perhaps, as you design your wedding bouquet or your table settings, you might consider incorporating a sprig of holly to ensure domestic happiness or forget-me-nots for true love. ☺

Cassie Curatolo is the assistant editor of special publications at the North Coast Journal.

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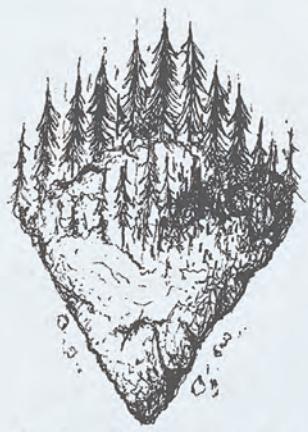
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The Perfect



Fit

Opposite page:
A computer-aided
design model
allows customers
to see the custom
ring before it's
fabricated.

This page: Three
custom rings by
Abraxas Jewelers.



Three local places for custom rings

By Cassie Curatolo

THE MUSIC, the evening's menu and handwritten vows are all tailored to reflect the betrothed. Engagement and wedding rings, too, are a special part of the union. Why shouldn't they be as unique as the couple exchanging them? If you're interested in giving your intended a one-of-a-kind ring, here are a handful of jewelers in Humboldt County that can help.

Abraxas Jewelers

Abraxas Jewelers offers beautiful jewelry tailored to your own personal style. Using CAD (computer-aided design) software, the jewelers at Abraxas develop models and photorealistic renderings of the ring, involving you



Clockwise from top left: 14k gold ring with rose cut diamond by Rachel Smith of OTJ; 14k rose gold and Moissanite ring by Tamara McFarland; 14k yellow gold + 14k white gold rings with brushed finish by Rachel Smith of OTJ; custom ring by Steve Johnson of OTJ.

Custom Rings

IN HUMBOLDT

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Rachel Smith — Often described as “reminiscent of ancient relics,” Rachel Smith’s pieces are earthy and organic. Relying on tools and techniques that have been used for centuries, Smith creates pieces that harken back to earlier times. Her designs are made with precision and skill, while incorporating older styles, like rose cuts

in the ring’s creation and allowing you to see the maker’s process from start to finish. Three custom jewelers offer a range of designs and styles. You’ll find classic, elegant pieces, as well as one-of-a-kind rings. Abraxas works with an array of materials, from local abalone to high-end and rare imported jewels, so you’ll have access to what fits both your style and your budget. The jewelers at Abraxas also refurbish antique rings, reworking family heirlooms to better suit you or your loved one.

Old Town Jewelers

Steve Johnson — All of Steve Johnson’s designs are “eyeball engineered” and executed with exquisite craftsmanship. Johnson approaches his work the old-fashioned way — without CAD programming. Instead, his rings start on paper, then he carves them in wax, casts, polishes, refines and bejewels them. Ranging from Renaissance to Art Deco-inspired to more abstract pieces with fluid, watery curves, Johnson makes original, wearable works of arts. He encourages people to think of jewelry as an emotional



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and antique European cuts, and hammered textures that yield a talismanic quality. Smith believes that jewelry is symbolic and should be as original and unique as the individual for whom a piece is made.

McFarland Designs

Using recycled metals and ethically sourced gemstones (both fair-trade mined and lab-created, including moissanite), Tamara McFarland creates beautiful custom wedding bands and engagement rings. In addition to being unique works of art, her designs are eco friendly and sustainable, so you don't have to forfeit your values for a stunning ring. McFarland's rings often have an organically textured surface and incorporate simple, elegant lines that speak to the ideology behind her work. 

Cassie Curatolo is the assistant editor of special publications at the North Coast Journal. She spends her free time playing roller derby, reading, painting and dabbling in the domestic arts.

Two "eyeball engineered" custom rings by Steve Johnson of OTJ.



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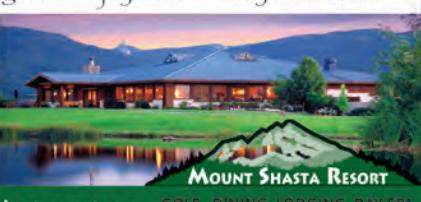
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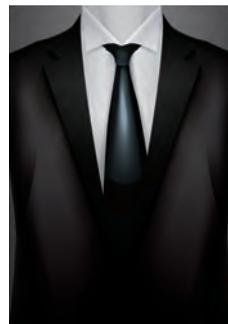


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